

# Technical Information > Timber Species Database

## > Ash, European



Fraxinus excelsior



<b>Wood type</b>	Hardwood
<b>Introduction</b>	European ash is typically straight grained, and this, combined with its toughness and flexibility, makes it one of the world's most valuable timbers for such uses as sports goods and striking tool handles. It is rather coarse textured, and varies somewhat in weight according to the growth conditions, from 528 kg/m <sup>3</sup> to 816 kg/m <sup>3</sup> when dried, but averaging 710 kg/m <sup>3</sup> .
<b>Environmental</b>	Not listed in CITES. Believed available from well-managed sources. Check certification status with suppliers.
<b>Distribution</b>	Europe including the British Isles, north Africa and western Asia, growing best on loamy soils where both the soil and the atmosphere is moist and cool.
<b>The Tree</b>	A tall, graceful tree, reaching a height of 30m to 42m on good sites, with a clear bole averaging 9m in length, and occasionally more. The diameter varies from 0.5m to 1.5m.
<b>The Timber</b>	There is usually no distinction in colour between sapwood and heartwood, freshly cut wood being whitish to pale brown with a pink cast, turning to a slightly brownish-white after drying. In some logs, an irregular dark brown or black heartwood is found, but this is not necessarily a defect, as the timber is normally quite sound. Logs containing dark heart streaks are often enhanced in value because of the decorative nature of the wood which is known as olive ash.
<b>Drying</b>	Dries at a fairly rapid rate without excessive surface checking and splitting, but under the influence of severe temperatures, there is a

tendency to distort and for end splitting to occur.  
Distorted stock responds well to reconditioning kiln treatment.

<b>Strength</b>	Similar to oak in general strength properties, but tougher and more resistant to splitting.
<b>Working Qualities</b>	Good - Although tough, ash works and machines quite well, and finishes to a reasonably smooth finish. It can be glued, stained, and polished.
<b>Durability</b>	Not durable
<b>Treatability</b>	Moderately Easy
<b>Moisture Movement</b>	Medium
<b>Density (mean, Kg/m<sup>3</sup>)</b>	710 (Density can vary by 20% or more)
<b>Texture</b>	Medium to coarse
<b>Availability</b>	Regular
<b>Price</b>	Medium
<b>Chemical Properties</b>	Selected stock may be tough and suitable for bending
<b>Use(s)</b>	Sports goods, Interior joinery, Furniture, Flooring

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